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Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Rankin street hockey reaching youth

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

The players have nicknames like Niagara, Ramrod, Cat Daddy, and Chicken Legs.

Their team names are the Takestock Rocks, from Rankin County, and the Spirit of Liberty, from Philadelphia, Penn.

The sport is street hockey, and during August 2-4 the two teams demonstrated their in-line skating prowess on several parking lots and gyms in metro Jackson — with the intent of showing how an innovative sports ministry can reach young people.

Guy Hughes, church growth missions strategist with Rankin

Hughes, church growth missions strategist with Rankin Association in Brandon, had the opportunity to meet Michael Wolfe, a minister from the Philadelphia area, at a multi-unit family housing conference in Orlando, Fla., earlier this year.

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Association in Brandon, had the opportunity to meet Michael Wolfe, a minister from the Philadelphia area, at a multi-unit family housing conference in Orlando, Fla., earlier this year.

The Rankin team — called the Takestock Rocks — played five exhibition games against the Spirit of Liberty, the team from Philadelphia.

Spirit of Liberty is made up of teenage boys from multi-family housing projects.

Street hockey is played by the same fundamental rules as ice hockey.

Players wear in-line roller skates and use a small ball for a puck. Upbeat music plays during the game; play by play announcers keep the audience informed of the action.

Wolfe's journey to this point in his ministry is a compelling story.

"My wife and I were International Mission Board missionaries in a Last Frontier area," he shared. "We were in an area with no electricity and very little



GET THAT PUCK! — Street hockey players from Philadelphia, Penn., and Rankin County (above and left photos) brave tropical heat to play an exhibition game in the parking lot of First Church, Pearl. (Photo by Tony Martin)

ministry provides praise and worship gatherings; houses of prayer; Bible studies; and children, youth, and woman's ministries.

The ministry also provides evangelistic block parties, fellowships, camps, and conferences for all ages.

Cutting Edge's sports evangelism program was the seedbed for the street hockey ministry, which is designed to reach unchurched people and present the gospel in a non-threatening environment.

Wolfe is unabashed in his real passion. "We really want to promote, enlist, and train churches across the U.S. to join us in the fastest growing mission field, multi-housing," he said.

"We'd like to see other churches and associations use street hockey as a ministry tool," said Hughes. "We'd be happy to talk to anyone who'd be interested in what we're doing."

For more information, contact Rankin Association at (601) 939-2182. Michael Wolfe can be contacted at Cutting Edge Ministries, P.O. Box 509, Harleysville, PA, 19438. Telephone: (215) 416-5471. Website: www.2theedge.org.

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WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

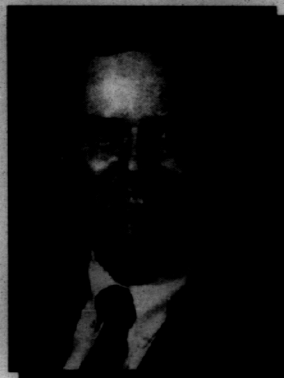
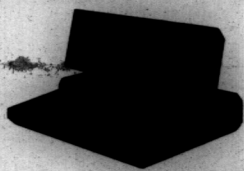
Gift of life given

Smith to lead center

SBC supports Scouts

Sunday School lessons

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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Perkins Jr.**
Editor

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William H. Perkins Jr.

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

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Postmaster: Send changes of address

to The BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box

530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Send

news, communication, and address

changes to The Editor, BAPTIST

RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS

39205-0530 (601) 968-3800

Fax: (601) 292-3330

E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

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Humans as a commodity

In the recently-released movie *AI: Artificial Intelligence*, scientists perfect robotic design to the point that real humans find it difficult to discern themselves from their mechanical counterparts.

In the role played by clones in countless other science fiction movies, these robots work as a service class to real humans — slaves, if you will. They are so flawless in design that they can even be used by parents to replace children who have disappeared or died.

Eventually the real humans begin to hold *Flesh Fairs*, where these thinking, feeling artificial beings are brought to be bought and sold in a twisted sort of flea market.

Some are killed for entertainment at the whim of fair goers. Displayed as mere wares at the *Flesh Fair*, their body parts can be taken from them and used for other, equally-perverse purposes. They are considered to be of no value by their tormentors, the human race.

Most people likely come away from the movie with a sense of relief that humans are not really like those depraved creatures depicted in the movie.

The only problem is, we are that depraved. In the real-life, real-time scenario occurring right now, a servant class of humans with no value is being created to be destroyed for whatever ends we decide — slaves, if you will.

In laboratories around the world, scientists are using as research material stem cells derived from the youngest and most vulnerable of our species: the fertilized embryos that, when given the opportunity in the safety of a mother's womb, will one day be born as fully-functioning humans.

Stem cells, discovered in 1998 by scientists at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, are the largely-undefined cells in embryos that are awaiting DNA commands to grow into heart, liver, brain, and

many other kinds of tissue in the developing baby.

Researchers believe stem cells can be coaxed into growing into replacement tissues and organs, and may hold promise in combating a host of withering diseases.

There is a big problem with embryonic stem cell research, however. The embryos must be destroyed in order to "harvest" their stem cells. The developing humans represented by those coveted stem cells must die.

Embryos are already being bought and sold around the world, and their stems cells are being torn from them for scientific experiments.

The as-yet unproven potential of these cells has turned the hunt for embryos into a commodities market, much like the market for fresh brains, spinal cords, and other baby parts that is presently supplied to researchers by the abortion industry.

Does anyone remember fetal tissue research? We were promised that experimentation on those baby parts would lead to cures for all kinds of human ailments. The outcome of virtually every fetal tissue experiment has been failure and disappointment.

Now scientists are ready to move on to stem cells, and the embryo commodity market in this country is about to explode, thanks to President Bush's decision last week to allow federal funding of stem cell research.

That's right — taxpayers will soon be



supporting ghoulish medical experimentation on stem cells from embryos destroyed in the harvesting process.

The President's caveat, that only existing stem cells lines from embryos that have already been killed can be used with federal funding, is a tepid, middle-of-the-road response to an issue requiring a strong moral stand.

We are on the verge of creating a whole class of beings with no value except for what they can do to meet our needs and demands. How far off is the fantastic premise of *AI: Artificial Intelligence*? Not far at all, as it turns out.

Life today truly is stranger than fiction.

GUEST OPINION:



Parents should make own codes

By Phil Boatwright
Entertainment critic

(Have you asked God to reveal himself through its chapters and verses?)

• Are you armed with the armor of God? (If not, you can't effectively witness or maintain a peace in your soul.)

Ecclesiastes chapter three states that there is a time to laugh and a time to dance. I take that to mean it's okay to be entertained.

Films can teach, entertain, and uplift the spirit. Indeed, they are modern-day parables.

As to why we need codes, however, the Bible is clear about what we should put in our minds (Phil. 4:8). God's Word doesn't apply to just parts of our lives, but to the sum total — including how we entertain ourselves.

Some key Scriptures:

• "I will set before my eyes

no vile thing." Ps. 101:3.

• "Have nothing to do with

the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them," Eph. 5:11.

• "Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil," 1 Thess. 5:21,22.

The best codes, of course, are those set by parents.

"Train a child in the way he should go," Prov. 22:6 states, "and when he is old he will not turn from it."

There can be nothing more difficult than raising a child to believe in spiritual things while living in a community that denies spiritual importance, but the task is not impossible.

Be aware. Set guidelines, and base those principles on your understanding of God's teaching.

Setting the criteria when children are very young — and then living the example — gives them much better odds of resisting the media's doctrine.

If your children understand biblical teachings, they will be able to cope with the contradictory messages and images of lust, greed, selfishness, and violence with which television and movie theaters bombard them.

We also can take steps to counter Hollywood's disregard for codes, including:

- Show what you stand for, be careful what you support.
- Make your voice known.
- Know the Word.

If God's Word is in your heart and mind, you'll be able to intelligently debate Hollywood's perceptions.

• Be informed.

Subscribe to a film review guide that's written from a Christian perspective.

You will save a lot of money by making this small investment.

Given the synopsis and content, you can decide if the new releases are suitable for your family's viewing.

Boatwright, of Thousand Oaks, Calif., is a Baptist layman, a veteran film reviewer, and editor of *The Movie Reporter* film guide, including its www.moviereporter.com website.

IMB appoints 47 missionaries at Glorieta

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP) — All God's people — not just an elite few — are called to missions, and when God calls, the proper response is to obey, International Mission Board (IMB) President Jerry Rankin told a capacity crowd Aug. 2 at the LifeWay Conference Center in Glorieta, N.M.

The appointment of 47 new overseas missionaries capped a week of seminars, Bible studies, missionary testimonies, and worship.

Rankin challenged the crowd to not let Satan deter them from fulfilling God's call for their lives.

"Some people want to hold on to comforts and security here in America," Rankin said.

"They say, 'I'll pray for the missionaries. I'll give more generously. I'll go on a short-term mission trip,' but all the time God has a place to which he is calling them.

"The call to missions is not a mystical call for an elite few. It's a call for all God's people. When God touches our lives, he can do with us what he wants. Our responsibility is to obey," Rankin said.

The new missionaries echoed that theme time and again.

One new missionary, who will minister to an unreached people group in Asia, said God began speaking to her about missions when she was a member of a Girls in Action (GA) missions group.

"God first called me as his missionary when I was 10 years old and in GAs," she said.

"Throughout my life, he has proven that he is able to accomplish all that he's called me to do. I trust him completely.

"We've learned there's no greater joy and no greater peace than being where he's called us to be," she said.



CALLED TO MISSIONS — Jan and Steve Lyon (right) of Fort Worth, Texas, share how God has called them to overseas missionary service, while Linda and Jim Malone (left) of Cookeville, Tenn., and other new missionaries look on. (BP photo by Sandy King)

"God called me later in life when we went on a short-term mission trip to Sri Lanka," her husband added. "I, too, have learned to trust and obey him. We will gladly go wherever he leads us."

Beverly Vick, a schoolteacher and pastor's wife from Mesa, Ariz., recounted, "For the past few weeks, I've been busy dismantling my happy and stable life, contemplating leaving behind my children, my family, my friends, and my dogs."

"The question kept popping into my mind: Why am I doing this, and the answer is because God called me to missions."

Understanding God's burden for the world's lost multitudes will make a person uncomfortable with life-as-usual in the United States, said Sam Taylor, pastor of Jerusalem Church in Fairfax Station, Va.

"After the fall of the Soviet

Union, our church became involved in a number of missions projects in Eastern Europe," Taylor said, "but the time came when I could no longer be content collecting offerings and participating in occasional short-term missions projects there."

"God has so burdened my heart for Eastern Europe that I have to serve him there full-time," Taylor said.

The lostness of the world and Jesus' command to go are not the main reasons Southern Baptists send out missionaries, Rankin said.

"We are not sending you out just because of the nations' lostness and need. It's not just because our Savior and Lord has commanded us to go," he said.

"It's because he who alone is worthy of all praise and glory is being deprived of that glory and praise," he added.

Speaking from 1 Cor. 16, Rankin promised the new missionaries they would find God creating amazing opportunities but also warned them to expect opposition.

"You are going out into a world where God has opened a door of unprecedented oppor-

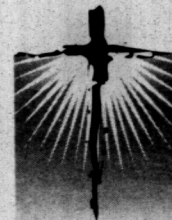
tunity in witness and service," Rankin said, "but as [the Apostle] Paul explained, you are going to encounter many adversaries and opposition."

In southern Asia, a handful of churches in one people group has grown to more than 900 in just 10 years, Rankin said.

A neighboring people group that had no churches six years ago now has 150 Baptist congregations. Another nearby group that had no churches two years ago now has 69 Baptist congregations.

When the Gospel begins to make such tremendous progress, it often is met by intense opposition from religious leaders, government offi-

cials, and others bent on persecuting new believers, he said, and the missionaries' response must be to be on guard, stand firm in the faith, be courageous, and give themselves in love.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

**THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE**

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All that keeps multitudes of people from finding salvation in Jesus Christ is that no one has ever told them about God's love and forgiveness, Rankin said.

"Multiplied millions of people are dying and going to hell, not because they have rejected Christ, but because no one has gone and told them," he said.

"Like David wrote in Psalm 142, they cry out, 'No one cares for my soul.' Do any of us care enough to say, 'Maybe I could be the one to go? I don't see how God could use me. I don't feel qualified, but I care. I'll be the one to go,'" Rankin asked.

Looking back

10 years ago

Utah Missions, Inc., a ministry directed at Mormonism and recently incorporated into the work of the Home Mission Board, calls for the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) to rescind a decision approved in Atlanta in June to go to Salt Lake City for the 1998 SBC annual meeting.

20 years ago

A medical emergency at the Baptist Sunday School Board's Ridgcrest Conference Center in North Carolina, which resulted in 310 people being treated for vomiting and diarrhea at local hospitals, is traced to contaminated ham in the food service area.

50 years ago

Accepting the unprecedented offer of stewardship evangelist B.C. Land to lead a stewardship revival in a Mississippi Negro church, such a revival is held in the New Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Jackson. H. L. Davis is pastor.

Pastor donates kidney to church member

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Pastors are expected to visit the sick, comfort the bereaved, and provide spiritual nourishment through their preaching and teaching.



TRUE LIVING SACRIFICE — Earl Clark (left), pastor of Pleasant Valley Church, Mendenhall, donated a healthy kidney to church member Mark Mangum on June 13. Both Clark and Mangum have fully recovered from the surgery. (Photo by Tony Martin)

already decided that I had to have one hundred percent support of the church before continuing.

"I had barely told the church what we were thinking about doing when one man said, 'Preacher, whatever it takes, we're behind you all the way.'"

"So for the next ten or eleven months, they stood by us. Our mountains and valleys were their mountains and valleys."

Indeed, there were plenty of mountains and valleys. Clark had to endure three days of tests at the University of Alabama-Birmingham (UAB) Medical Center in Birmingham, Ala.

Mangum had already learned that his sister and two other men were not good matches for transplants. As it happened, Clark was a perfect match.

Because of a whole host of setbacks, the surgery had to be postponed. At one juncture, Clark was found to have prostate problems.

Clark had a biopsy to ensure that there was no cancer, but the doctors had to be persuaded that there were no other problems that would jeopardize his or Mangum's health.

"We came so close several times, only to have to postpone surgery over and over."

"At one point, I was so upset about a postponement that I went to the bathroom and threw up," Clark said.

Finally, on June 13, 2001, the surgery was completed. While both men were under anesthesia, doctors removed one of Clark's healthy kidneys and inserted it in Mangum's body.

"It was a bit more complicated than we'd imagined," said Clark. "As it happened, both my kidneys had two arteries

supplying blood to them. One artery per kidney is normal.

"The doctors at UAB had done 5000 routine kidney transplants, but only 100 with a kidney such as mine."

"One doctor even considered waiting until another donor could be found, but it would've meant another three- or four-year wait for Mark. We just didn't have that kind of time," Clark said.

The surgery was a success. Mangum's new kidney began functioning immediately, and there has been no evidence of any rejection.

"I feel better than I've felt in years," said Mangum. "The only restriction I have is that I can't lift anything heavy for a while, but other than that I'm fine."

Clark is fine, too, although he admits, "I thought I was going to die. I've never been sick and never had any kind of surgery. It was tough."

Mangum remains positive. "This surgery has caused a lot of people to pray," he said. "We got cards and calls from all over the county, even some from out of state. That's not a bad thing."

"Just this morning," said Clark, "someone stopped me in the bank and asked about Mark."

"You know," Clark continued, "folks ought to think about being a living donor. I'd hope everyone has decided to be an organ donor after their death, but there's a special need for living donors — a friend to friend, or to a family member."

"If there were forty people in the church who needed kidneys," said Mangum, "and Earl had forty to give, he'd do it."

It is through that kind of sacrificial giving, of a friend to a friend — a Christian brother to a Christian brother — that Mark Mangum has literally been given a new lease on life.

Because of the care and support of his pastor and church, Mangum has the prospect of healthy and full life.

NAMB staffers depart over new BFM

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — Three of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) management and professional staff members have left the agency after stating they could not conduct their ministries in accordance with the Baptist Faith and Message (BFM) as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in June 2000.

The three departing staffers are:

- Gerry Hutchinson, manager of church and community ministries evangelism, who resigned effective July 31.
- Donoso Escobar, associate in church and community ministries evangelism, who has retired.
- George Pickle, chaplaincy associate for health care and pastoral counseling, who also has retired.

It's the rare pastor, though, that would literally give up part of his body for one of his church members.

Earl Clark has pastored Pleasant Valley Church, Mendenhall, for several years. He had known Mark Mangum casually for a long time, but came to know him much better when Mangum moved across the street from the church.

"I was a member at another church," said Mangum, "but my son Jamie, who has cerebral palsy, would say, 'I want to go to that church,' talking about Pleasant Valley. So we started going."

It was Mangum's involvement in Pleasant Valley that became one of a whole series of divine appointments.

When Mangum was a college student, he dealt with "either strep or mononucleosis, we're not sure which," he said. "It settled in my kidneys. Ten years later, my kidneys were dead, not functioning. I was on dialysis for six months. Then, in August of 1991, I got my first transplant."

The transplant lasted for eight years. In August of 1999, the transplanted kidney failed, and Mangum found himself back on dialysis.

"Dialysis can get you by," he said, "but you sure don't have any quality of life." Mangum was going to dialysis three days a week, with each session lasting about four hours.

"I got to know Mark better when he began attending our church," said Clark. "I knew of the health problems he'd had, and I guess it was in March or April of 2000 that I began seriously praying about giving Mark one of my kidneys."

At first Clark did not tell anyone of his prayers. Clark eventually told his wife about his growing conviction that this was the thing to do.

"It's like a lot of other prayers," Clark said. "I'd pray, 'Lord, is this of you or is it of me?'"

Persuaded that it was indeed God's plan, Clark then went to Mangum and said, "O.K., I'm giving you one of my kidneys. No argument." Mangum protested, but Clark insisted.

Clark then went before the church to share the details of his decision. "I'd

Annuity Board trustees approve '02 insurance rate increases

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (BP) — Trustees of the Annuity Board (AB) of the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting July 30-31 in Colorado Springs, approved a January 1 rate increase for participants in the board's Personal Security Program (PSP) and Employer Security Program (ESP) plans, including Medicare supplement plans.

The Personal Security Program will receive a five percent increase while groups of 10-25 employees in the Employer Security Program will receive a 12-month rate increase of 12%. Participants in the Medicare Supplement plans will receive a \$20 per month increase in their premiums. Insurance marketing personnel will communicate specific increases to larger groups in the Employer Security Program.

"Last year's rate increase and changes in benefit structures have allowed us to control the overall cost to our participants," said Doug Day, executive officer for benefit services. "Two additional medical products with enhanced plan benefits will be offered as of January 2002." These plans will be priced according to their plan design. Participants will now have more flexibility in choosing the level of plan that best suits their particular need and cost structure.

Trustees were told there will be no rate change for dental and life insurance products. Although there will be no rate increase in long-term disability plans, benefits will be enhanced. Participants in long-term disability plans will receive specific information describing the additional benefits. A short-term disability product will become available for all PSP and ESP participants. Trustees were told that participants have shown a keen interest in long-term care coverage provided through GE Capital Assurance, with more than 1,000 individuals purchasing the coverage since it became available last fall.

Southern Baptist Annuity Board President O.S. Hawkins recapped the agency's progress in implementing its expanded ministry assignments during the July 30-31 meeting of trustees in Colorado Springs, Colo. "As of the end of June, the Annuity Board is prepared operationally to function in a registered investment environment," Hawkins reported.

Jeffrey P. Billinger, the board's treasurer and chief financial officer, reported total assets were \$7.4 billion at June 30, compared to \$8 billion at June 30, 2000. While total assets were down due to overall market declines, net income for the second quarter was \$225.9 million, the highest quarterly net income since the last quarter of 1999. Gifts to the endowment program from individuals and churches to the Adopt An Annuitant program were up by 12.3 percent over the same period last year.

The next scheduled meeting of the Annuity Board trustees will be Nov. 5-6 in Dallas.

NOBTS names Smith to lead Clinton center

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — Louis Smith, former director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board church-minister relations and annuity department for 14 years, and Steve Moore, a former International Mission Board missionary to Brazil, have been named as new directors of New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) extension centers in Clinton, Miss., and Albany, Ga., respectively.

Before retiring this past April, Smith had visited the New Orleans campus at least twice a year to interview prospective candidates for the state convention.

An alumnus of NOBTS — graduating in 1960 with a master of divinity degree — Smith has served as NOBTS' Mississippi Alumni Association state chapter president.

He also earned his bachelor of arts degree from Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton.

A native of Skene, Smith previously served as pastor of Briarwood Drive Church, Jackson, and First Church, Canton, after serving other churches in Alabama and Arkansas.

While Smith's church membership resides at First Church, Jackson, he currently is serving as interim pastor at Blackjack Church in Yazoo City.

He also served in a variety of capacities for the state convention: as member of the convention board, as chairman of its executive committee, and as chairman of the convention's Order of Business Committee.

He additionally served as moderator of Metro Association, Jackson.

"Louis brings extensive experience in

pastoral ministry, as well as experience working with pastors and churches in Mississippi. I am confident he will have an impact on our Clinton Center," said Jimmy Dukes, dean of the NOBTS extension center system.

The Clinton extension center classes, providing training for graduate-level students, are held at First Church, Clinton, and on the Mississippi College campus.

Moore remembers his first experience as a Southern Baptist missionary, long before he began serving as senior associate pastor at Sherwood Church in Albany, Ga., where he is currently involved in coordinating missions and other pastoral care duties.

Having worked with youth and college students at Paramount Church in Amarillo, Texas, Moore decided to call the IMB's 1-800 number to ask about opportunities to minister.

He was asked, "Given all the facts about you (seminary graduate, experienced minister), how soon can you be ready?"

That began a ten-year journey in South America for Moore and his wife Laura that included collegiate ministry in a university with more than 50,000 students in Sao Paulo, one of the largest cities of the world.

Moore then continued his student-related ministries when he moved back to the United States at First Church, Springdale,

Ark., where he also worked in lay mobilization, new member assimilation, adult discipleship, and leadership development.

"God has used Steve as a consultant for pastors and staff members to increase their effectiveness in ministry," said Sherwood Church senior pastor Michael Catt, noting that before coming on staff Moore helped the church fine-tune its ministries.

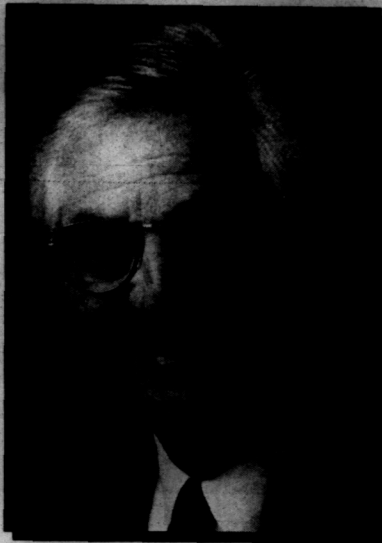
A native of Kansas City, Mo., Moore earned a master of divinity degree in church history and theology, graduating cum laude, from Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City.

He earned his bachelor of arts degree in political science with an emphasis on constitutional law and law history from the University of Missouri in Columbia.

Through extension centers located all over the Southeast, NOBTS is pushing the campus closer to the church field, making it possible for someone who may be in a ministry position to maintain that position and pursue theological education.

Using non-traditional schedules, technology-based classrooms, and church-focused competency-based curriculum, the extension centers provide training that encourages healthy churches.

For additional information about NOBTS extension centers, contact Dukes at (800) 514-1175 or visit online at www.nobts.edu/extensions.



Smith

NOBTS links grads to opportunities

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — An online resume referral system, designed to connect students and alumni to churches with employment opportunities, has been launched by New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS).

Ministry Connections allows the seminary's church-minister relations (CMR) office to process resume requests for churches more efficiently, taking advantage of the World Wide Web as its medium.

In addition to rapid access to resumes for churches, those posting resumes have greater control over updating their information, customizing up to three different resumes, and selecting preferred demographic information.

The bottom-line benefit of Ministry Connections is that applicants' resumes will be going out to more churches, ensuring greater exposure. Ron Holman, the seminary's CMR and alumni affairs director, said.

For more information or to set up an account with NOBTS' church-minister relations, contact Holman at (504) 662-6701, ext. 3332, or e-mail at holman@nobts.edu or alumni@nobts.edu.

HUMMINGBIRD BAPTISTS?

I love hummingbirds! They are among the most fascinating creatures that God ever made. Every year I put out feeders and have the joy of watching them come and eat, darting in, out, and around the bushes and dispensers.

They are beautiful, little, delicate creatures. You can't help but admire their work ethic and their strength, as well as their speed and intensity.

Recently, I was visiting with some friends who have six or eight feeders hanging in their back yard and from the woods around their house came hundreds of hummingbirds. I've never seen anything like it in Mississippi.

Most of their feeders had four of the little perches and feeding holes. Sometimes there would be four hummers sitting there eating at the same time. That is somewhat of a rarity though, because the hummingbird is fiercely territorial and does not want anybody else feeding where he is feeding or getting in his area.

I watched, with interest, all those hummingbirds and I observed that occasionally there would be one hummingbird on a feeder, with the other three holes available on that feeder and the other five or six feeders would be open.

Would you believe, some of those other little dudes would come and run off that one little



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

hummingbird that was eating, despite all the other available spots to which they could have gone?

From early morning until late afternoon, hummingbirds will fuss and fight and run each other away from the perch. It reminded me of the way we Baptists act sometimes. We get to be so personal and possessive, and so territorial that we don't want anybody to infringe on our turf and we don't want, in any way, to be inconvenienced. We want what we want, when we want it, or somebody is going to get it!

At times, the little hummingbird does not even want to feed at the feeder — he just doesn't want anybody else to have the chance to feed. They just can't seem to get along.

Can they be more like us than we want to admit? At times, it seems as though we just can't get along either.

Occasionally, we're as bad as the guy about whom you may have heard, who was caught in a storm, had his boat wrecked, and was cast upon a deserted island. He lived there, totally alone, for years.

With nothing to do and no where to go, the guy decided to make the best of his situation, so he just went to work! He built himself a little town — a house, store, bank, church, and a main street.

For 15 years he existed all alone in his own little township. One day a passing boat saw smoke on this deserted island and discovered there was someone living there.

A rescue crew was dispatched to the island and they found the poor fellow who had been there alone all those years. Before they loaded him up to take him home, he gave them a tour of his little town. He showed them all the stores, his house, and the places he had built. He showed them his little church.

One of the rescuers noticed there was another church down the road and asked the man, "There is another church down the road — why did you build two?" The man answered, "Oh, I used to go to the church down the road, before it split, and now I go here."

While the hummingbirds

are not likely to change, perhaps we could learn some lessons that would help us in the Lord's church:

• *In church, all the territory is God's territory.* No doubt God cares deeply about your special interests and ministry, but it is equally as important to understand that he probably cares as deeply about the ministries in which you are not interested.

• *In church, God welcomes all.* There are no exclusions, only inclusions. If you and I feel good about running folks off from the feeder, we are not thinking like, or acting like, the Lord of the church.

• *In church, there is plenty to go around.* I sometimes tell the hummingbirds to stop squawking because there is plenty of food! I tell them that if it looks like the feeder is going to run out, just stay calm — I'll fill it up again!

You know, they don't listen to me anymore than we listen to the Lord when he tells us, "My grace is sufficient for you." There is plenty of work, there are plenty of resources, and there is plenty of God to go around. Paul said, "And my God shall supply all of your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." What a storehouse of plenty!

Enjoy his blessings. Share his goodness. Remember, you do not have to squawk and fuss in order to enjoy the nectar of life!

JUST FOR THE RECORD



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(*I have sinned.*)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.
(*I repent.*)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(*I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.*)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Yazoo Association sent a team of 37 volunteers (pictured) to Mulhall, Okla., June 23-30. The team participated in the rebuilding of First Church, Mulhall, which was destroyed by a tornado. David Chisolm, Yazoo City, was the team leader. Billy Dowdy is the missions director for Yazoo association.

Northcrest Church, Meridian, had six youth participate in the recent State Bible Drill. Pictured are (front row, from left) Rebekah Holley, Christi Wiltcher, Kara Hull, Lance Price, Adam Embrey, and Brice Jones.



Bible Drill participants of Northcrest Church, Meridian

A mission team made up of members from Highland Church, Immanuel Church, Goodrum Church, and Wayside Church (all in Warren Association) traveled to Rush Church, Friendsville, Maryland, July 7-12. Team members conducted a children's crusade in Friendsville City Park. The crusade included puppets, magic shows, clown acts, and Bible stories.

Heaven's Gates and Hell's Flames will be presented at First Church, Quitman, Aug. 19-21 at 6:30 p.m. For additional information or for free tickets, call the church office at (601) 776-2184.

Pinelake Church, Brandon, will present an encore presentation of We Will Worship on August 19 at 7 p.m. For more information call (601) 992-2630.

Mission team from Yazoo Association

Point of Grace will be in concert at First Church, Starkville, Aug. 21 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$8 each for groups of 15 or more, \$10 general admission, \$12 at the door, and \$18 limited reserved seating. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. For additional information, call the church at (662) 323-5633.



First Church, Kosciusko, sent a group of 37 youth and nine chaperones (pictured) to Montreal, Canada, in July. Team Quebec, a group of missionaries, coordinated the ministry in the most unreached region of North America. Under the auspices of World Changers, the major thrust of this event was to help start the first English-speaking Canadian Southern Baptist Church in Quebec. It is called Renaissance Church.



Mission team from Warren Association



GAs of Morgan Chapel, Sturgis, held its recognition service on July 29. Pictured (from left, front row) are Emily Gregory, Michaela Mills, Sara Nichole Jackson, Madison Morgan, Kimberlin Vickers, Corey Lewis; (2nd row) Keally Fulgham, Stormey Myers, Larkin Vickers, Bailey McMinn, Neshay Vickers, Tia Vickers; (3rd row) Kyla Morgan, Katie Lewis, Whitney Morgan, Sommer Reeves; and (4th row) Amy Morgan, Jamie Lewis, Sheila Morgan, Meg Gregory, Penney McMinn, Misty Lewis, and Mae Morgan, GA leaders. Ben Yarber is pastor.

Mission Friends of Providence Church, Hattiesburg, collected A Mountain of Rice during the month of June. The 191 pounds of rice collected was given to Christian services to help feed the hungry. Ray Cummings is pastor.

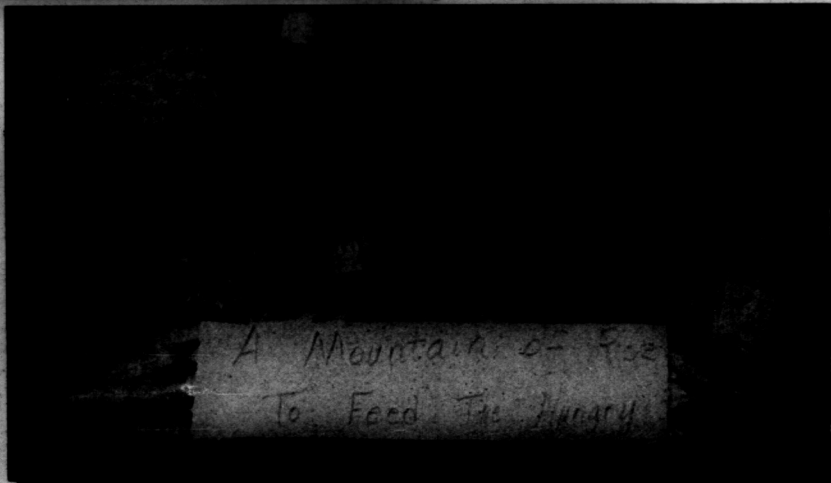
Mississippi Women's Missionary Union (WMU) will host Pops and Me Day for preschoolers ages three through pre-first grade September 8 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Camp Garaywa in Clinton. Cost is \$5 per person and includes lunch.

To register, send check, parent's name, child's name, phone number, and church name to WMU, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205. For more information contact Debbie Sills at (601) 292-3320 or (800) 748-1651, ext. 320.

2001 staff of Central Hills Retreat, Kosciusko

The 2001 staff of Central Hills Retreat in Kosciusko, was honored on July 22 by First Church, Kosciusko, with an appreciation dinner. Coordinating the meal and serving as hostesses were members of Woman's Missionary Union of First Church. Barry C. Corbett is pastor. Pictured (from left, first row) are Jacob Pryor; Jimbo Stewart; Adam

Newsome; James Ray, camp manager; (second row) J. W. Bryant; Kyle Edwards; Hualan Riddell; Lee Stevens; Ryan Moore; Lance Martin; Tim Parker; Chad Logan; (third row) John Tate Ferrell; Ryan Parker; Will Sharp; Matthew Johnson; Terry Dale Cruse; Justin Saffle; (back row) Kasey Williams; Pat Sharp; Mark Stanton; Robert Donnerley; and Aaron Herrington.



Mission Friends of Providence Church, Hattiesburg

Ladies of Antioch Church, Brandon, recently attended the Women of Faith Conference in Nashville, Tenn. Pictured (from left, first row) are Gayla Perry, Cynthia Stuart, Sue Patrick, Wendy Carter, Renea Rhodes; (second row) Lenora Waits, Lee Patrick, Penny Carter, Karen Wofford, and Tanya Harrison.

The National Campers on

Mission rally was held June 20-23 in Rayne, La. Twenty one states were represented. The Mississippi Unit had 25 members present. Pictured are Alton and Edith Allred, Brookhaven; DeWitt and Kathryn Craft, Liberty; Howard and Cathreine Crum, Meridian; Howard and Mary Etta Conner, Liberty; Aubrey and Jane Ervin, Gautier; L. C. Hoff, Brookhaven; Charles and Naomi Lee, Tupelo; G.A. and Lynn McCoy, Carriere; H.E. and Sarah McDaniell, Biloxi;

Ladies of Antioch Church, Brandon

Bay Vista Church, Biloxi, will host Awesome August Monday Night August 20 at 7 p.m. The speaker will be Dean Register, pastor of Temple Church, Hattiesburg, and special music will be presented by the praise team of First Church, Biloxi.

Cathreine Crum, Meridian; Howard and Mary Etta Conner, Liberty; Aubrey and Jane Ervin, Gautier; L. C. Hoff, Brookhaven; Charles and Naomi Lee, Tupelo; G.A. and Lynn McCoy, Carriere; H.E. and Sarah McDaniell, Biloxi;

Revival dates

Bethel, Drew: Sept. 9-12; 7 p.m. each night; Sunday, Michael Mitchell, Rome, speaker; Monday, Al Cummins, Cleveland, speaker; Tuesday, John Chouccoli, Shaw, speaker; Wednesday, Perry Keyes, Boyle, speaker; Brent Garrison, Drew, music; Lyle Ward, Drew, pianist; Larry Chouccoli, pastor.

Crowder, Crowder: Aug. 26-29; services, 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Keith Grubbs, Meridian, evangelist; Joe Meurrier, music; Ben James, pastor.

Siloam Church (Golden Triangle): August 19-23; Sunday, 6 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 7 p.m.; Kermit McGregor, Mendenhall, speaker; Lee Gordon, West Point, music; Walter Simmons, pastor.

Note burning ceremony at Bethlehem Church, Pinola



Bethlehem Church, Pinola, held a note burning ceremony on June 17, to celebrate the final payment being made on its fellowship hall building.



National Campers on Mission Mississippi Unit

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Bobby and Jerry Priest, Kokomo; Bobby and Frances Scitzs, Meridian; Ricky and Edith Youngblood, Pascagoula; not pictured are George and Nancy Magee, Kokomo.

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Land: SBC unwavering in support for BSA

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, wants to make it clear — the Southern Baptist Convention is not wavering in its support of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA).

A story in the Aug. 6 issue of Newsweek states that "religious groups are lining up on both sides of the debate" between the homosexual community and the Boy Scouts of America after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Scout organization has the right to prohibit homosexuals from becoming troop leaders.

The Newsweek story reports that Mormon and Roman Catholic churches have supported the "straights-only

rule," but that "the United Church of Christ, along with Baptist and Episcopal congregations" have asked scout troops to reconsider their ban on avowed homosexuals.

Not so fast, said Land. "Southern Baptists are overwhelmingly supportive of the Scouts' position that homosexual conduct is inconsistent with the Boy Scouts' values," Land said, citing a resolution on the issue adopted by messengers to the 2000 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

The resolution affirmed the Scouts' right "to define and delimit their own membership and leadership criteria," he said.

"There will be no wavering on this stance for the vast majority of Southern Baptist

churches," he continued, noting that the resolution encouraged the Scouts "to hold fast to its traditional ideals."

BSA spokesman Greg Shields said there is no evidence congregations were asking the organization to "reconsider" their decisions on homosexuality.

"I am only aware of one Baptist congregation and rela-

tively few Episcopal congregations that have voiced concern over the Boy Scouts' policy," Shields said. "Nationally we have wonderful support from these congregations."

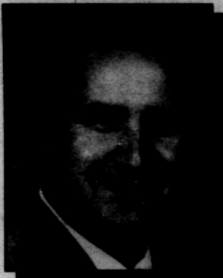
Shields added that more than 50,000 youngsters were in troops and packs sponsored by United Church of Christ congregations.

Staff change

Main Street Church, Hattiesburg, has called Jim Burnett as pastor effective August 16.

A native of Brandon, Burnett is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi and New Orleans Seminary.

He previously served at Raymond Road Church, Jackson.



Burnett

REVIVAL RESULTS



First Church of Helena, Jackson County, had 13 professions of faith and nine additions by letter during a revival held July 8-13. Seventeen people (pictured) were baptized.

HOMECOMINGS

Bethany, Potts Camp: August 26; 65th anniversary; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch; singing featuring Steel Faith and Southern Delight, 1 p.m.; Ken Stovall, speaker;

Linwood, Union: August 26; service, 10 a.m. followed by lunch; Tommy Anderson, speaker.

Bethel (Copiah): Aug. 26; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; dinner and fellowship following worship; Glen Mullins, guest speaker; Brenda A. Nixon, music; Keith Smith, pastor.

Short Creek, Yazoo City: Aug. 19; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; followed by a covered dish lunch; Norris Ables, former pastor, speaker; Alan Balliet, pastor.

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NAMES IN THE NEWS



Blair, K. DeLoach, T. DeLoach, Cooper, Perkins, and Sills

Estelle Cooper of Carrollton Church, Carrollton, was honored March 19 for her 60 years of service to Woman's Missionary Union (WMU). Cooper has served as District 8 Director of WMU, Mississippi Baptist WMU Coordinator of Area 3, and has been Carroll Association director for a number of years. She is still active in her church and association, and carried the Mississippi state flag at the 100th birthday celebration of WMU in Richmond, Va., in 1988. Cooper is part of four generations of women serving in WMU. Pictured,

from left, are Jane Blair, WMU director, Carrollton Church; Kim DeLoach; Taylor DeLoach; Cooper; Linda Perkins; and Debbie Sills, consultant, Mississippi Baptist WMU.

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MINISTER OF MUSIC. Shades Crest Baptist Church, Birmingham, AL, is searching for an experienced person to coordinate our music ministry. We are a congregation of 1,500 members, affiliated with both the CBF and SBC. Send resumes to Minister of Music Search Committee, Shades Crest Baptist Church, 452 Park Avenue, Birmingham, AL 35226; call (205) 822-1360; or e-mail our pastor, Dr. Dennis Foust at dfoust@shadescrest.org.

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BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS



Jones, Chism, Trouard, Johnson

The Phi Beta Lambda (PBL) Parliamentary Procedure team from Blue Mountain College (BMC) placed first in the nation at the PBL National Leadership Conference held in Orlando, Fla., in July. The team members (pictured, from left) are Sonia

Jones of Blue Mountain; Deborah Chism of New Albany; Leigh Trouard of Ripley; and Brandie Johnson of Blue Mountain.

Blue Mountain College is accepting applications for Fall

lege in which they were enrolled. Special registration times may be scheduled by calling the registrar's office (662) 685-4771, ext. 135. Office of admissions may be called at (662) 685-4161 or (800) 235-0136 for additional information.

2001 semester classes. Orientation will be held on August 27, beginning at 8:30 a.m. Registration for evening and weekend classes will also be held on August 27 between 6-7:30 p.m. Students who have not previously enrolled in college must send a high school transcript. All others must send a statement of good standing from the last col-

Brenda Paganelli, director of financial aid at Blue Mountain College, was recently selected as president of the Mississippi Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. She is a member of Mount Olive Church, Ripley, where she serves as youth director.



Paganelli

Dot Jackson, a business professor at Blue Mountain College, was recognized during the Phi Beta Lambda National Leadership Conference as the longest standing advisor. The conference was held in Orlando, Fla., in July.



Jackson

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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

The Body of Christ: God's family

Ephesians 2:11-22

By Kathy Mord Alford

"Imagine the sheer delight of enjoying perfect relationships... a community without even the shadow of evil, where every member can be fully himself without fear of promoting rivalry or releasing something bad," envisions Larry Crabb, Christian psychotherapist, as he encourages Christians to connect to God and to each other based on the Trinity's relationship in each other.

Connection is what the apostle Paul had in mind as he instructs us in our relationship to God and to each other. Using Jesus' illustrations of abiding in him, of being built as his church, and of giving us his peace, Paul focuses his teaching on our reconciliation in Christ. In studying these illustrations

and key words in our scripture, I am impressed with their similarities to each other, all depicting unity, harmony, completeness, oneness, and connection in some way. The words themselves link together to emphasize the church's purpose, setting it apart from other organizational creeds.

The word "reconcile" here stresses the completeness of Christ's sacrifice for our sin. Sin separates us from God, and its consequence has fractured mankind in all our relationships. Only the life-giving blood that Christ sacrificed for us in his new covenant will fully restore us to God. Accepting the gift of his salvation entitles us to enter into the family of God. He is now our

Abba Father, and Christ, our covenant brother.

While Abba Father delights in us individually as his sons and daughters, we take our collective place in his body of fellowship which Christ calls his church. Naming Jesus as Lord and Savior is an individual decision, but

the moment we speak his name, we join hearts and effort with all believers, embracing Jesus as the head of our unified body.

One body, so many believers. How can we be harmonious, yet not lose our identity? Herein is the way we obey God's command to show his love to the world in loving each other: by his supernatural peace. Jehovah-Shalom not only gives us his peace, but he also becomes our peace. The definition of peace — one, wholeness, rest, and restoration — implies that, without God's peace, a person is fragmented and restless. The beauty of its application, to set at one again,

conveys a healing wholeness with its Author, and we become in Christ what God originally intended for us to be.

A blessing and gift, as well as a responsibility, this peace of God. The Jewish New Testament says, "And let the shalom (peace) which comes from the Messiah be your heart's decision-maker, for this is why you were called to be part of a single Body" (Col. 3:15a). Again, by implication, one cannot partake of peace unless he connects in the body.

"Building relationships with one another [in the body] is the most efficient and effective form of spreading the message of the gospel," says Keith Intrater, author of *Covenant Relationships*. "People who are not well grounded in the security of supportive relationships will often turn to outward achievement to try to create an appearance of security...when we are secure in our identity, we can then act out of obedience to the Spirit."

To describe who we are in

Jesus, Paul writes of our being built together to become a dwelling where God lives, signifying a harmonious unity of purpose. He also teaches unity as Christ's body, with individuality of its members expressed through spiritual gifts.

"Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around.... Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of Christ's body.... Since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts, let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't" (The Message, Rom. 12:4,5).

In other words, to belong, truly belong to the body of Christ, serve in peace with others who are your brothers and sisters in Christ. Be centered in God, and love from the center of who you are.

Alford is a member of First Church, McComb.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Turned down

Hosea 13:1-8, 12-15

By Harold Simmons

Have you ever been turned down by someone in your effort to love them? God had loved Israel with a tender love and had done all that he could to show them of his care for them. They rejected that love by turning to the fertility gods of the people around them.

Determined to reject God (13:1-3). Often the whole Northern Kingdom was called Ephraim because it was the largest of the tribes in the north. In verse one God speaks as if the Northern Kingdom were already dead. They were determined to reject God for idols that they fashioned themselves.

They spared no expense to make idols of the finest materials that they could afford.

Last week in an airport in Honduras, I saw an altar upon which human sacrifices were offered. The grisly altar was a visual reminder of how far the Israelites had gone to follow other gods.

Verse two indicates that human life had been sacrificed to idols. I thought as I viewed the altar — what a waste of a life. The same is true for a person who rejects God's love — what a waste of the sacrifice that Jesus made for us as well as the waste of eternal life.

Because of their rejection of

God's love, judgement was coming (v. 3). The people were going to be as nothing. Like the morning mist that quickly blows away or is burned away by the sun and is no more, the once proud nation would be gone.

Forgotten but not gone (13:4-8). The Northern Kingdom had forgotten God, but he was about to remind them in a devastating manner that he was still in charge. He reminded them that he was the builder of their nation and they had a covenant with him that he shall be their God (v. 4). They were so busy with their worship of idols that they would not know that God was about to bring destruction to them (v. 7).

A friend who had served in the South Pacific told me of seeing areas that the Japanese had made points of ambush in the Bull grass. He said that there

was no indication by dirt or trampled grass where the Japanese soldiers had dug holes in which to sit in ambush. The American soldier would be completely unaware of the danger until it was too late.

The same was true for Ephraim. God would bring judgement and they would not be aware (vv. 7-8). God had warned them and he has given us plenty of warning of what is coming if we continue to serve other gods of our making.

Tragic results (13:12-15). The sins of Ephraim were accounted for. In the eastern kingdoms, there was an accounting of the deeds of people—the good and the evil against the king. An example of this is found in Esther 2: 21-23. God was going to hold his people responsible for their actions. Today is no different. God holds us accountable for our actions.

Hosea stated that the sin of rejecting God for idols was as

illogical as a child refusing to be born (v. 13). At the moment for birth, the child was willfully refusing to be born.

The sin of Ephraim was just as illogical. They were rejecting the God who had made everything possible for them to exist. It is not wise to reject what God has offered for us to have new birth—to be born again.

It made no difference to the people how unwise it was to reject God; they continued in their sin. It was all to their detriment, as it is to ours.

God will bring judgement, not because he wants to but because we have put him in a position that he must as the righteous God. "It is not God's will that any should perish," the scripture tells us. Because we will not change, he must take action because of his nature. Don't wait too late to seek God's face.

Simmons is pastor of Hebron Church, Grenada.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of church events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be (a) typed, (b) neatly printed on white paper, or (c) neatly printed on forms provided by the convention. Articles must be received in the office of the editor at least two weeks prior to the date of publication.

News may be submitted to the editor by mail, or by hand delivery to the office of the editor.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles and photographs submitted to the editor are not to be returned.

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THE VILLAGE VIEW



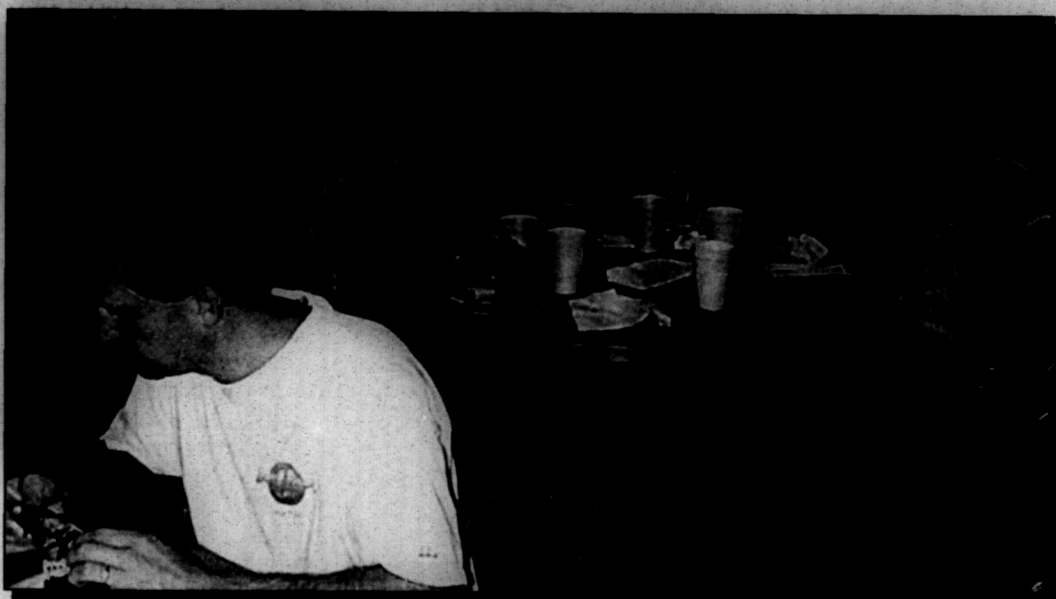
Ronny E. Robinson, Executive Director

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The members of the Bob Barker Sunday School Class of First Church,

Madison, hosted a bar-beque for residents of the Residential Family Ministries and Emergency Care programs of The Baptist Children's Village on August 11, 2001.



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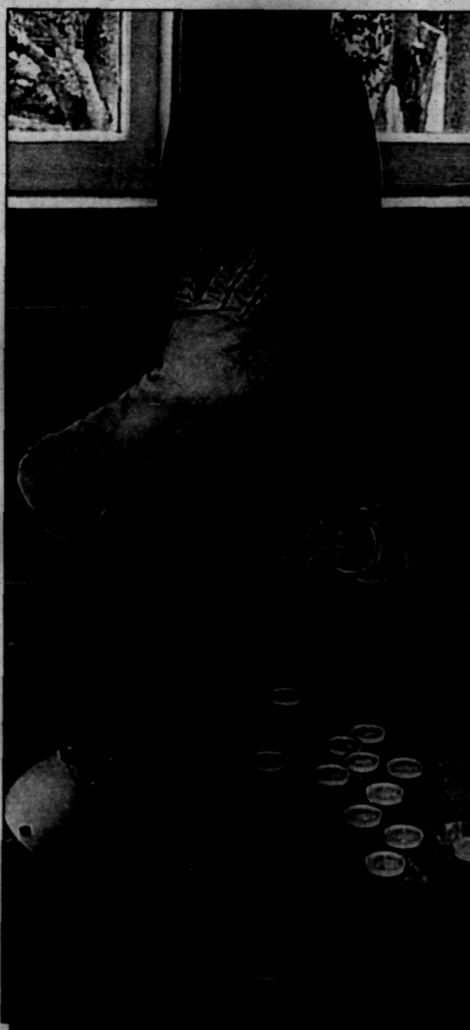


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The Baptist Children's Village sponsored its 6th Annual Spiritual Emphasis Retreat for all five campuses at Gulfshore Baptist Assembly in Pass Christian. There were Bible studies and activities for all ages. Thanks to all who helped make this retreat possible.

Sundberg: sports parents should detach

ARLINGTON, Texas (BP) — Although he spent 16 years in the major leagues and won a 1985 World Series title with the Kansas City Royals, Jim Sundberg felt more pressure as a spectator at his children's games.

Scanning the headlines, he knows many parents feel the same way — and when they don't learn how to control their emotions at youth sports events, the results can be tragic.

"That's what happens when there's outbursts," Sundberg said of the sports-connected violence that has erupted in recent years.

"Somebody's emotionally connected or enmeshed with their child's play. Parents need to begin the process of letting go, letting the child have his own experiences.

"Don't become attached so heavily to those that you're emotionally connected with all the time," he said.

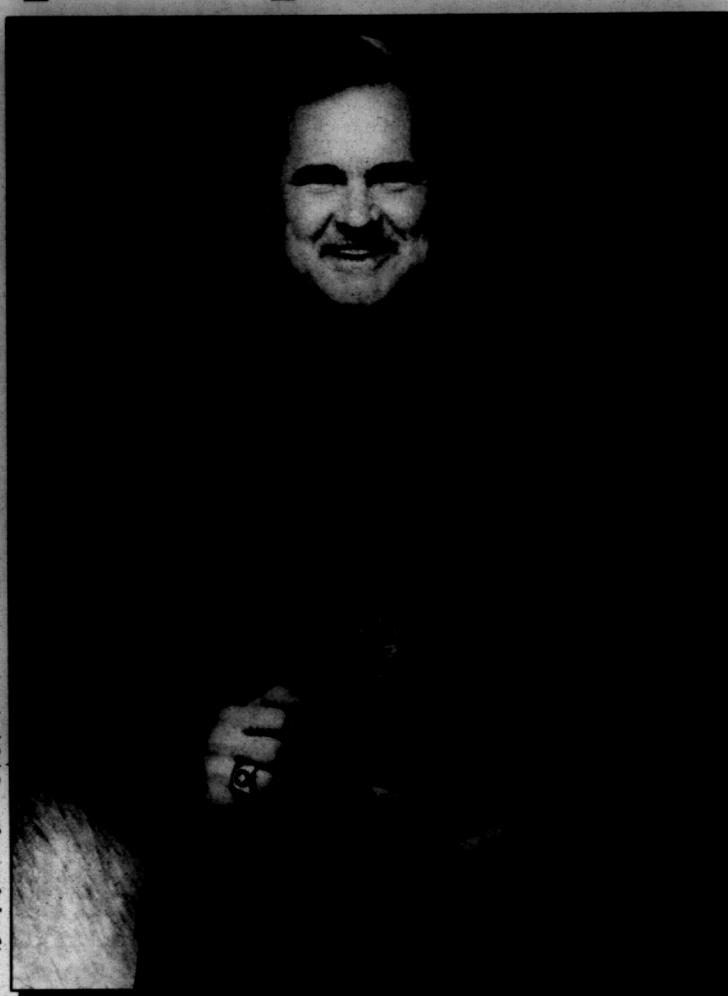
That's what Sundberg had to do. Despite a long playing and broadcasting career, as a parent Sundberg had to learn new ways of handling his emotions.

When he got angry over a referee's call, he walked around to cool down. If a loudmouthed parent upset him, he talked it over with his wife or moved to a different seat where he couldn't see that person.

He also turned to prayer. "At any moment, you can approach God and ask for help," Sundberg said.

"I would say, 'Lord, I'm starting to well up here. This person next to me is agitating me and I'm beginning to get angry because of the way they're responding. Help me relieve this,'" he recalled.

Sundberg recommends others take such



ALL-STAR CAREER — Former Major League Baseball catcher Jim Sundberg holds the World Series trophy he earned as a member of the Kansas City Royals. (BP special photo)

steps to deal with their emotions and actions as their kids participate in Little League, soccer, and other sports.

Parents must recognize this is their child's experience, he said, not something

they can grab on to relive their own childhood, or make up for something they missed.

The former All-Star catcher has become an authority on the subject through the company he formed several years ago, Sports Training Systems.

Set up to publish instructional materials for coaches and players, his work brought him in constant contact with youth sports leagues.

The biggest problem he saw in this environment was parents. To address the situation, Sundberg and his wife, Janet, a behavioral specialist, wrote "How to Win at Sports Parenting."

Though it isn't on any best-seller list, he said the volume nevertheless has generated response since its release last year.

Some youth league directors have given the book to "troublemakers" and never faced another awkward situation with that parent, said Sundberg, a member of Lake Arlington Church in Arlington, Texas.

He believes because of their busy schedules and increased stress, there is a generation of parents who need encouragement on how to respond to their children and at games.

"There seem to be a lot of them who aren't aware of what their role is," Sundberg reflected. "Part of writing the book was to give parents the framework by which they could understand their role."

"We've had a great time with our children in sports," he said. "None went on to play professionally."

"We had some great weekends of family time together and cherished that, without having to play at a higher level," Sundberg pointed out.

Major Leaguer compares gear to armor of God

ARLINGTON, Texas (BP) — It's been more than a decade since Jim Sundberg removed his catcher's uniform for the last time, but that gear has become a physical demonstration for his spiritual teaching on the armor of God.

Sundberg has developed a presentation on the armor of God's importance to Christians' lives, correlating different facets of baseball gear to the Eph. 6:11-18 passage.

"It's a thought process that becomes a way of life, a second nature," said Sundberg, who accepted Christ as Lord and Savior 23 years ago.

"I think about it through the day, when I'm in prayer and when I'm with other people. Sometimes I'll say, 'Lord, I don't know what to say to this person, give me an idea,'" he said.

The athlete-turned-businessman first presented a brief version of the teaching at an All-Star game chapel in 1995.

The six pieces of armor and their parallel to his gear:

- The belt of truth is the uniform belt, such a vital element that a major leaguer can't step onto

the field without one.

The belt of truth represents an intimate, honest relationship with God and is foundational for spiritual battle, he said.

- His chest protector is the breastplate of righteousness.

This tells a Christian his or her position in Christ; it is important for every believer to understand what Christ did on the cross and the power that gives his children, Sundberg said.

- His spikes represent feet

fitted with the Gospel of peace.

He often refers to a Roman soldier's footwear, which kept him from falling down under the weight of heavy gear. Likewise, as a player he wore three different kinds of shoes, depending on the turf and game-day conditions.

- The shield of faith is his catcher's mitt, which works together with the breastplate.

The confidence he had in his mitt for protection is similar to faith: "It doesn't matter how we

feel, it's in concrete that we can trust God. He has promises in his Word and we can trust him," Sundberg said.

- The helmet of salvation is his catcher's mask.

Without a mask he could have been knocked unconscious. Likewise, the helmet of salvation is the road to becoming Christlike, he said.

- His bat represents the sword of the Spirit, which is the Bible.

A major league bat is designed specifically for its user and helps the batter against an adversary on the mound, he said. Unless a person knows the truth of God's Word, there is no way he or she can use it as a weapon against the devil, he said.

At Lake Arlington Church, Sundberg's home church in Arlington, Texas, 300 men and their sons saw Sundberg's presentation on the armor of God at a banquet last year.

Pastor David George recounted, "I had several guys tell me it was the best program we ever had. The guys related to it. Jim's a good communicator and has a good use of humor."



Mississippian writes for pamphlet series

A new pamphlet series entitled, The Baptist Style for a New Century, features pamphlets by a Mississippi Baptist professor and eight other prominent Baptists. The new series, sponsored jointly by the Baptist History and Heritage Society and the Whitsitt Baptist Heritage Society, includes, Doing Authority Baptist Style: The Bible, by Claude L. Howe Jr., professor emeritus of church history at New Orleans who lives in retirement in Picayune. For more information, access the Baptist History and Heritage Society website at www.baptisthistory.org, or call (800) 966-2278.

Bibliocipher

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BKAU JMUDJO-EDU:

JMUDJO-VYLU

Clue: B = L

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Acts Nine: Five.